

I. Executive Summary

Overview of the Buildable Lands Requirement

In 1997, the Washington State legislature adopted the Buildable Lands amendment to the Growth Management Act (GMA), RCW 36.70A.215. The amendment requires six Washington counties including King County, together with their cities, to prepare a review and evaluation report every five years. The 2007 King County Buildable Lands Report contains data on 5 years of development activity (2001-2005) along with an updated analysis of land supply and capacity (2006) to accommodate Household and Job Growth Targets. Findings are reported for the Urban Growth Area (UGA) as a whole, each of 4 urban subareas, and each city. Based on the results of the Buildable Lands evaluation, “reasonable measures” may be required at the countywide or city level to ensure sufficient capacity for planned growth.

The GMA requires designation of Urban Growth Areas to “include areas and densities sufficient to permit urban growth that is projected to occur in the county for the succeeding 20-year period” (see RCW.36.70A.110). The Buildable Lands evaluation represents a mid-course check that this important GMA requirement is being met in King County. The focus of the evaluation therefore is on the designated Urban areas of King County and growth targets for those areas as established in the Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs).

This 2007 King County Buildable Lands Report (BLR) is the second five-year evaluation prepared by the county and its cities in response to the Buildable Lands amendment. The first evaluation report was submitted to the State in September 2002. While the 2007 BLR complements and extends the information in the earlier report, it stands alone as its own evaluation.

For more detail on the Buildable Lands requirement, see Chapter II.

Countywide Collaboration

Buildable Lands implementation within King County is a collaborative effort of all 40 jurisdictions. It consists primarily of coordination among relatively independent local efforts, achieved through:

- Technical assistance and project coordination provided by Suburban Cities Association (SCA) staff in partnership with King County
- Technical guidelines for local data collection and analysis
- Use of standardized worksheets and templates to collect and analyze data
- Technical staff forums to coordinate Buildable Lands data collection among jurisdictions
- Collaboration of staff from King County, SCA, and the cities of Seattle and Bellevue on countywide methodologies, overall review and evaluation framework, and contents of the report
- Oversight and guidance from the Growth Management Planning Council, a formal body of elected officials representing King County and its cities

Such coordination ensured that the 2007 Buildable Lands analysis was carried out in a broadly consistent and comparable manner throughout King County, while allowing for limited local variations to account for differing land use and market characteristics, data resources, and local land use policies.

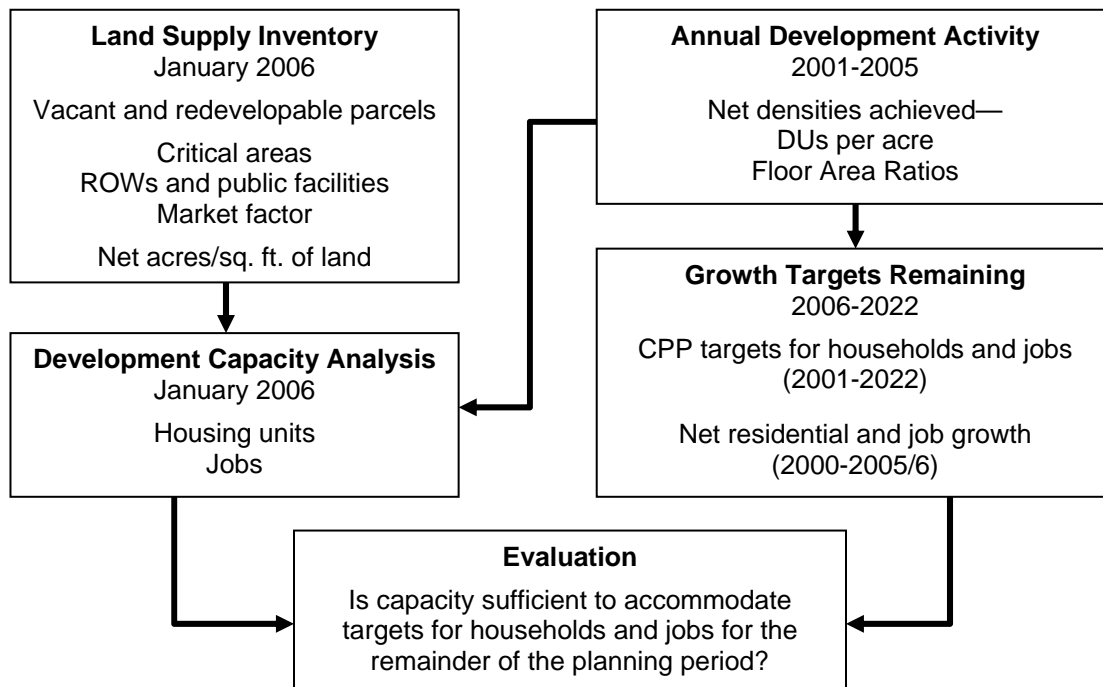
Methodology

The 2007 Buildable Lands Report incorporates the results of several technical elements, including the following:

- Analysis of subdivision plat and building permit data for the years 2001-2005
- Analysis of parcel and critical areas data using geographic information systems (GIS) to estimate the acres of vacant and redevelopable land within zoning designations as of early 2006
- Conversion of the land supply data to units of capacity (housing units, jobs), based on analysis assumptions for land dedications, market availability, densities, and other factors
- Evaluation of the sufficiency of the capacity for housing and jobs to accommodate growth needs for the remainder of the planning period (2006-2022).

Figure 1.1, below, illustrates the relationship among these technical elements within the entire data collection, analysis, and evaluation process. For more detailed documentation of the methodology used in preparing this report, see Chapter III and technical appendices.

Figure 1.1: Elements of Buildable Lands Analysis and Evaluation



Overall, the technical framework for the 2007 Buildable Lands Report is consistent with that used in the 2002 report. Limited revisions and updates were made to analysis assumptions, including densities, public land needs, critical areas, market factors, and other factors. Changes to the methodology were informed by a review of the 2002 BLR methodology, analysis of emerging data trends, discussions with local staff, and meetings with stakeholder groups to seek input on methodology and the scope of the evaluation.

Major Findings of the 2007 Buildable Lands Report

Analysis of data on growth and development activity for the 5-year review period (2001-2005) produced the following major findings:

- **Housing growth on track with targets.** King County jurisdictions added over 49,000 net new housing units within the UGA. Approximately half of the new housing was single family, half multifamily. Overall housing growth—within each subarea and within the UGA as a whole—is slightly ahead of pace to reach 2001-2022 Household Growth Targets within the planning period.
- **Trend toward higher residential densities.** Single-family and multifamily residential densities permitted from 2001-2005 were higher than densities observed in development during the previous 5-year review period. UGA-wide, single-family development achieved 6.2 units per net acre in plats. Multifamily permits achieved 38 units per net acre. Net densities were calculated based on actual measurement of critical areas, rights-of-way and public uses in residential developments.
- **Mixed indicators of non-residential growth.** Data for the county as a whole show a net loss of approximately 25,000 jobs between 2000 and 2006, due to the recession of 2001-2004. Permitting of new commercial and industrial development, however, continued to occur throughout Urban King County, with permits issued for about 18 million sq. ft. of space in commercial zones and 10 million sq. ft. of space in industrial zones UGA-wide.

Analysis of data on land supply and development capacity, estimated as of early 2006, produced the following major findings:

- **Residential land capacity.** The UGA contains approximately 22,000 net acres of land suitable for residential development to accommodate growth during the planning period. Based on current plans and regulations, achieved densities, and other factors, the UGA has capacity for about 84,000 single-family homes and about 205,000 multifamily units. Half of the UGA's residential capacity is in mixed-use zones.
- **Sufficient capacity for household targets.** Overall, the UGA capacity of 289,000 additional housing units can accommodate an estimated 277,000 households, more than twice the number needed for the 106,000 households of remaining growth target over the remainder of the planning period. Capacity sufficient to accommodate household targets exists within each planning subarea and within each jurisdiction as well.
- **Commercial and industrial land capacity.** The UGA contains more than 6,000 net acres of land suitable for non-residential development to accommodate job growth during the planning period. Based on current plans and regulations, actual densities, and other factors, the UGA has capacity for about 400,000 additional jobs in commercial and mixed-use zones and 123,000 jobs in industrial zones.
- **Sufficient capacity for job targets.** Overall, the UGA capacity for approximately 527,000 additional jobs is double what is needed to accommodate the growth target of approximately 267,000 jobs for the remainder of the planning period. Capacity sufficient to accommodate job targets exists within each planning subarea and within nearly all individual jurisdictions.

Chapters IV, V and VI of this report contain detailed countywide and subarea findings in all of these areas. Chapter VII, the heart of the report, provides detailed information about each jurisdiction in Urban King County.

